

Mar 12, 2022

Senator Winfield, Representative Stafstrom, distinguished members of the Joint Committee on the Judiciary. My name is Parishe Smith and I am a resident and community organizer in the Northend of Hartford.

I am writing **IN SUPPORT** of:

- [S.B. No. 387](#) AN ACT CONCERNING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE JUVENILE JUSTICE POLICY AND OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE.
- [S.B. No. 392](#) AN ACT CONCERNING STATEMENTS MADE BY JUVENILES.

I am writing **IN STRONG OPPOSITION** to the following bills:

- [S.B. No. 365](#) AN ACT CONCERNING JUVENILE AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORMS
- [S.B. No. 388](#): AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEFENSE OF A PERSON OR A PERSON'S DWELLING, PLACE OF WORK OR MOTOR VEHICLE.
- [H.B. No. 5418](#) AN ACT REVISING JUVENILE AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE STATUTES AND INSURANCE STATUTES CONCERNING THEFT OF A MOTOR VEHICLE

I am testifying in opposition to the bills I listed above because they're rooted in false claims that Connecticut is experiencing tremendously high rates of crime being committed by youth. This is simply not supported by data. This crime rhetoric is being used to cause fear and push for reforms that, in the end, will result in more Black and Brown youth and low-income White youth becoming involved in the juvenile justice system. This will not provide a solution for any issues related to crime in our state.

In addition to these false claims, we simply cannot invest money in making the state of Connecticut "tougher on juvenile crime" while the majority of the inner cities are economically neglected and plagued with poverty. Poverty is the mother of ALL crime! It's easy to blame the people who are doing the crime, but why are they doing it in the first place? Maybe it's because they were pushed out of the failing education system, maybe they're homeless and slept behind a building that night, or maybe it's because they have no other options because their most basic human needs aren't being met. When a human need is not being met, someone's human rights are being violated and I encourage you all to start exploring ways on how we can effectively solve the issue because research has already proved to us that getting tougher on crime is ineffective.

I urge you to SUPPORT [S.B. No. 392](#) and [S.B. No. 387](#) with the recommendations submitted by the [Connecticut Justice Alliance](#). I also demand that all the other bills are killed immediately. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to testify today and feel free to reach out if you have any further questions.

Parish Smith

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